



Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee

Communique No. 8 – Quarter 2 2023

East Kimberley Regional Meeting – Kununurra and Wyndham

The Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee (AJAC) met for our first ever regional meeting in Kununurra and Wyndham on 31 May and 1 June 2023.

We were honoured to be welcomed to country with a Mantha Ceremony performed by Mirriuwung Elders Agnes Armstrong and David Newry of the Mirima Dawang Woorlabgerring Language and Culture Centre. Thank you, Agnes and David, for this beautiful welcome on behalf of the Mirriuwung community!



From L-R: Daisy Ward, George Hayden, Ella Smith, Henry Lockyer, Kylie Le Lievre, Joslyn Eades-Tass, Lizzie Ellis, AJAC Secretariat Gina Hill, Daniel English. Not pictured: Jean O'Reeri, Justin Kickett

We wanted to meet in the East Kimberley, to understand justice issues from a regional and community perspective. Our understanding of these issues has been greatly enhanced by speaking with community members and leaders, Department operational staff and Aboriginal community organisations on the front line helping their mob.

New AJAC Members Connected to the South Metropolitan, Pilbara and East Kimberley Regions

During this meeting, we were also proud to welcome our new AJAC members Amanda King (South Metropolitan), Henry Lockyer (Pilbara) and Jean O'Reeri (East Kimberley). Amanda, Henry and Jean were appointed by the Attorney General John Quigley in April 2023 and they bring a broad and diverse experience to the AJAC. Their knowledge, commitment and dedication to their communities make us stronger.

Organisations We Visited During Our Regional Meeting

WA Government

During our meeting we met with frontline Department staff to better understand the work the Department does in the East Kimberley region.

- **East Kimberley Youth Justice Services** - East Kimberley Youth Justice Team Leaders Karen Apperley, Matt Rosher and their staff discussed with us the creative strategies they use to work with young people in the region who come into contact with the justice system.

- **Kununurra Courthouse** - We met with Clerk of the Court Jackie Cocker and Senior Aboriginal Liaison Officer (SALO) Peter Sibosado. Mr Sibosado has worked for the Department for more than twenty years assisting Aboriginal defendants, victims and witnesses to understand Court processes.
- **WA Police (Kununurra)** – Senior Sergeant in Command Neil Vanderplank and Senior Sergeant Gerry Gibson briefed us about their biggest areas of focus in Kununurra, being family and domestic violence and young people.

Community

- **Binarri-Binyja Yarrowoo Aboriginal Corporation (BBY)** - CEO Christy Hawker presented to us about the Empowered Communities initiative that operates in 10 regions across Australia, including the East Kimberley where BBY is the backbone organisation. BBY has built partnerships with 28 local member organisations to deliver programs and services to the community.
- **Kununurra Waringarri Aboriginal Corporation (KWAC)** – CEO Desmond Hill and his staff presented to us on KWAC’s social programs and services designed to empower young people and their families to help themselves. Some of us observed KWAC staff working on the Miriwoong Community Patrol, a night patrol service which helps people in need of a safe space to sober up.
- **Miriuwung Gajerrong (MG) Corporation** – Unfortunately due to staff being called away for important work, we were unable to meet with MG Corporation. We understand that their work with community must take priority and we appreciate the important work that they do. We look forward to speaking with them in the future and hearing about their work delivering the Target 120 Program for young people and families, coordinated by the Department of Communities.
- **Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation – Community Centre, Safe Houses (NAAC)** - Chairman Graeme Trust, CEO Scott Farris-White and Director Shirley Williams spoke to us about NAAC’s work providing community development programs, cultural programs, sobering up shelters and a women’s refuge in Wyndham.
- **Wyndham Youth Aboriginal Corporation (WYAC)** – CEO Neville D’Silva and his staff discussed the challenges of delivering programs for young people in Wyndham and introduced us to some of the young people they are helping. WYAC delivers services focused on the young people of Wyndham with partial funding from the Department of Justice under the Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy.

Thank you to all who spoke with us during our time in Kununurra and Wyndham and for sharing your work with us. We were inspired by the resilient and dedicated people we met. This regional meeting has reinforced our commitment to provide honest advice to Government about what we hear and see in the community, as connected to our strategic priorities (Young People, Safe Housing and Homelessness, Aboriginal Workforce Development and Employment, and Procurement and Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations). We reiterate our commitment to connect and collaborate with other Aboriginal advisory groups across Government so that as Aboriginal leaders we are appropriately informed, supported and can direct relevant advice to the appropriate leaders across public sector. We met earlier in the year with the Department of Communities Aboriginal Strategic Advisory Group and look forward to meeting with the Aboriginal Police Advisory Forum later in the year.